



## TOP 12 MILITARY LEADERS

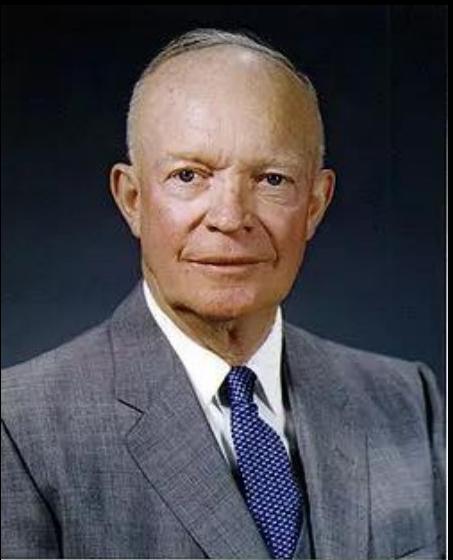


On 28 October 312, the forces of Maxentius met Constantine's forces at the Milvian Bridge in Rome. Constantine's army was outnumbered 2:1. But, chi-rho legends state that in the night he had a vision of Jesus and was told to use the Christian cross. Constantine made his soldiers do the same. He led them to battle with the sign of Chi-Rho, the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek (Christian cross) and he made a promise that if successful in battle, he would adopt Christianity.

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The Battle of Waterloo, 18 June 1815, detail showing the Duke of Wellington on horseback.

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**Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower** (October 14, 1890 – March 28, 1969) was a five-star general and Supreme Allied Commander during D-Day invasion of France in 1944. He was also the 34th President of the US from 1953–1961. David was born to a large family (he had six brothers) in Kansas in 1890. From an early age he was interested in outdoor sports and military history. Despite his mother's objection to war, he continued his military studies and later joined the military academy at West Point. One of the great successes of his administration was signing an armistice in the Korean war in 1953. He also severely criticised his former Allies – Britain, France and Israel for their invasion of the Suez canal.



**Napoleon Bonaparte**, (15 August 1769–5 May 1821) later known as Emperor Napoleon I, was a French military and political leader who is considered one of the most influential figures in European history. Born in Corsica and trained as an artillery officer in mainland France, he rose to prominence under the First French Republic. He distinguished himself as a military commander fighting in Italy. In 1799, Bonaparte staged a coup d'état and installed himself as First Consul; five years later he crowned himself Emperor of the French. In the first decade of the Nineteenth Century, he turned the armies of the French Empire against every major European power and dominated continental Europe, through a series of military victories epitomised in battles.



LA BATAILLE D'AUSTERLITZ. 2 DECEMBRE 1805 (FRANÇOIS GÉRARD)

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**Alexander the Great** (356 BC – 323 BC) was perhaps the greatest military commander of all time. During one decade, he conquered all of the known world leaving one of the world's most extensive empires. Alexander was born in the northern Greek kingdom of Macedonia, in July 356 BC. His parents were Philip II, King of Macedon, and his wife, Olympias. As a young child, he was tutored by the great philosopher, Aristotle. Aristotle taught a variety of subjects including philosophy, poetry and the ideals of government. To some extent, these ideals influenced Alexander when he was later governing conquered nations. For a man seemingly invincible on the battlefield, he ironically died at the early age of 32.



**Genghis Khan** (1164 – 1227) was a fierce and brilliant military commander, who achieved unprecedented success in setting up the Mongol Empire which stretched across Europe, China and Asia. His Mongol armies left a trail of fear, death and destruction. But, he also created a vibrant empire with a common language, booming trade, tolerance of religion and some basic customs and laws. The young Temujin was born the son of a local tribal leader, Yesugei – sometime between 1163 and 1167. Ironically, he died after falling from a horse in 1226. By his own request, he was buried in an unmarked grave within Mongolia.

Alexander Cuts the Gordian Knot  
(1767) by Jean-Simon Berthélemy



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**Akbar The Great (1542 – 1605)** Akbar was the greatest of the Moghul emperors, consolidating a large empire across India, and establishing a culture promoting the arts and religious understanding. Akbar was the son of Humayun, grandson of Babur. He became the third Moghul Emperor. Although the first part of his reign was taken up with military campaigns, Akbar displayed a great interest in a wide variety of cultural, artistic, religious and philosophical ideas. Akbar was also known for his religious tolerance and, although a Muslim, took an active interest in other religions. Akbar died in around 1605 and was buried near Agra. He was succeeded as emperor by his son, Prince Salim, later known as Jahangir.



**Constantine the Great (27 Feb c. 272/273 – 22 May 337)** Constantine was Roman Emperor (A.D. 306-337). He was the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity and played a crucial role in the spread of the religion. With co-Emperor Licinius, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313, which proclaimed tolerance of all religions throughout the empire. Constantine was born in Naissus, Moesia Superior (modern-day Serbia). His original name was Flavius Valerius Constantinus. In 337, Constantine fell ill and tried to make it back to his capital Constantinople. As he was dying he asked to be baptised by the bishops in the River Jordan.

## The Battle of Milvian Bridge



On 28 October 312, the forces of Maxentius met Constantine's forces on the river Tiber. Constantine's army was outnumbered 2:1. But, chi-rholegends state that in the night he had a significant dream, where he had a vision of Jesus and was told to use the Christian cross. Constantine made his soldiers go into battle with the sign of Chi-Rho, the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek (Christian cross) and he made a promise that if successful in battle, he would adopt Christianity.

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**Gustavus Adolphus** (9 December [N.S 19 December] 1594 – 6 November [N.S 16 November] 1632), also known in English as Gustav II Adolf or Gustav II Adolph, was King of Sweden from 1611 to 1632, and is credited with the rise of Sweden as a great European power (Swedish: *Stormaktstiden*). During his reign, Sweden became one of the primary military forces in Europe during the Thirty Years' War, helping to determine the political and religious balance of power in Europe. He was formally and posthumously given the name Gustavus Adolphus the Great. On 6 November 1632, Gustavus encountered the Imperial Army under Albrecht von Wallenstein at Lützen, in what would prove to be one of the most significant battles of the Thirty Years' War. He was killed 1632.



**Erwin Rommel** (1891 – 1944) ‘The Desert Fox’ was admired by both his troops and enemies developing a reputation for invincibility. He was a commander during the invasion of France (1940) and achieved striking victories in the North Africa desert war. He turned against Hitler in 1944, and was forced to take his own life. Rommel was not a member of the Nazi Party. Rommel and Hitler had a close and genuine, if complicated, personal relationship. Rommel, as other Wehrmacht officers, welcomed the Nazi rise to power. The close relationship between Rommel and Hitler continued following the Western campaign; after Rommel sent to him a specially prepared diary on the 7th Division, he received a letter of thanks from the dictator.

THE SCENE SHOWS THE DEATH OF KING GUSTAV II ADOLF OF SWEDEN ON NOVEMBER 6, 1632



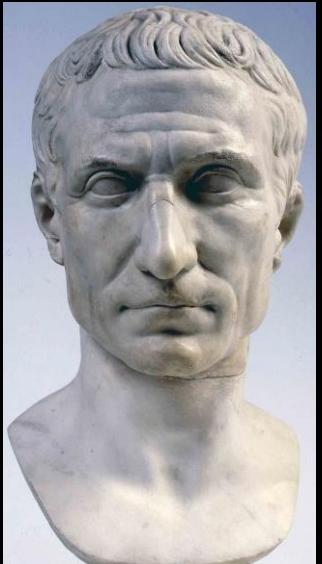
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**Sir Winston Churchill** (30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965) was a British politician and author, best known as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during the Second World War. Churchill was famous for his stubborn resistance to Hitler during the darkest hours of the Second World War. Winston was born at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock near Oxford to an aristocratic family – the Duke of Marlborough. He was brought up by servants and friends of the family. Churchill died in his home at age 90, on the morning of Sunday 24 January 1965. His funeral was the largest state funeral in the world, up to that point in time. Churchill was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953.



**Gaius Julius Caesar**: 2 July 100 BC – 15 March 44 BC) was a Roman general and statesman. A member of the First Triumvirate, Caesar led the Roman armies in the Gallic Wars before defeating his political rival Pompey in a civil war, and subsequently became dictator from 49 BC until his assassination in 44 BC. He played a critical role in the events that led to the demise of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. After assuming control of government, Caesar began a programme of social and governmental reform. The conspirators attacked him with daggers. Whether he fell in silence, per Suetonius, or after reply to Brutus' appearance – kai su teknon? ("you too, child?") is variably recorded. Between twenty-three and thirty-five wounds later, the dictator-for-life was dead.



Marc Antony's  
Oration at  
Caesar's Funeral  
by George Edward  
Robertson

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**Hannibal** between 183 and 181 BC) was a Carthaginian general and statesman who commanded the forces of Carthage in their battle against the Roman Republic during the Second Punic War. In 218 BC, Hannibal attacked Saguntum (modern Sagunt, Spain), an ally of Rome, in Hispania, sparking the Second Punic War. The precise year and cause of Hannibal's death are unknown. Pausanias wrote that Hannibal's death occurred after his finger was wounded by his drawn sword while mounting his horse, resulting in a fever and then his death three days later. Cornelius Nepos and Livy, however, tell a different story, namely that the ex-consul Titus Quinctius Flamininus, on discovering that Hannibal was in Bithynia, went there in an embassy to demand his surrender from King Prusias.



**Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington**, 1 May 1769 – 14 September 1852) was an Anglo-Irish statesman, soldier, and British Tory politician who was one of the leading military and political figures of 19th-century Britain, serving twice as prime minister of the United Kingdom. He is among the commanders who won and ended the Napoleonic Wars when the Seventh Coalition defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Wellington is famous for his adaptive defensive style of warfare, resulting in several victories against numerically superior forces while minimising his own losses. Wellington died at Walmer Castle in Kent, his residence as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and reputedly his favourite home, on 14 September 1852.



The Battle of Waterloo, 18 June 1815, detail showing the Duke of Wellington on horseback.